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## THE HUDSON-FULTON EXHIBITION

THE Museum's part in the Hudson-Fulton Celebration—the Exhibition of Dutch and American art—was opened on Monday evening, September 20th, with a reception to the members and their friends and the Hudson-Fulton Commission and Committee on Art Exhibits. The guests were received in the Morgan Gallery of Porcelains, by Hon. Stewart L. Woodford, President of the Hudson-Fulton Commission; Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan, President of the Museum and Chairman of the Committee on Art and Historical Exhibits; Mr. Robert W. de Forest, Chairman of the Committee on Art Exhibits; Mr. George F. Kunz and Mr. Edward Robinson, of this Committee.

A string orchestra under the direction of David Mannes, stationed in the gallery at the north end of the main Fifth Avenue hall, played during the evening.

The Exhibition will continue during November.

## OLD DUTCH MASTERS\*

BY ROYAL CORTISZOZ

FROM THE "TRIBUNE," SEPTEMBER 19, 1909

EVERY student of seventeenth-century Dutch painting knows how indispensable to his purpose are certain historic galleries in Europe. Nevertheless, if anything could be substituted for the experience thus to be secured, it would be such an acquaintance with the subject as may now be made at the Metropolitan Museum. The collection of about a hundred and fifty old Dutch pictures which has been brought together there by the Hudson-Fulton Celebration Commission is one of extraordinary significance.

No such resplendent show has hitherto been made in this country, and in all probability it will be many a year before anything like it is organized again. It was rendered possible, of course, only by the generous spirit of a number of private

\* Many important notices on the painting in the Dutch Section of the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition have appeared in the daily press, two of them we are kindly allowed to reprint here.

owners. From the Museum's own rich store a number of invaluable works have been drawn, but this undertaking has rested heavily on the coöperation of Mr. J. P. Morgan, Mr. J. G. Johnson, Mr. H. C. Frick, Mrs. C. P. Huntington, Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer, Mr. M. C. D. Borden, Mr. B. Altman and divers others.

The immediate appeal of an exhibition of this sort is made to the spectator's curiosity and his sensuous instinct. It is, by itself, a little exciting to see so many famous works gathered together in one place, and after the first moment of surprise there follows a kind of glut of the eye, a reckless gormandizing of massive draughtsmanship and sumptuous though somber tone. Later impressions take account of more complex elements of charm and provoke reflection on the remarkable educational value of the collection, framed as it is with special reference to that Dutch period in the history of New York which is just now uppermost in our minds. These pictures throw, to begin with, a flood of light on Dutch types, Dutch manners and dress, boldly relieved against a background of Dutch landscape and architecture. In the portraits of Rembrandt and Hals you are brought face to face with the seventeenth-century burgher and his wife; Vermeer and De Hoogh will show you how they lived at home, and while the Ruisdaels expose the character of the countryside and waterways in Holland the broadly humorous compositions of Jan Steen will people the scene for you with Hobbinsol and his doxy. The light that suffuses this land of our ancestors is gray and cool. For all the moisture in that northern atmosphere things are seen clearly in it and painted with meticulous accuracy. Steady-going realists we dub the painters of the place and the period. For one explanation of the course they followed look at their flat landscape, their comfortable farmsteads and their comparatively sunless sky. Look also at the society reflected in their paintings, at the heavy frames and honest but quite unemotional physiognomies of the men and women, and at the wholesome, earthy lives they lead indoors and out. What more natural than that the artists dwelling in

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PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF  
BY REMBRANDT  
LENT BY HENRY C. FRICK

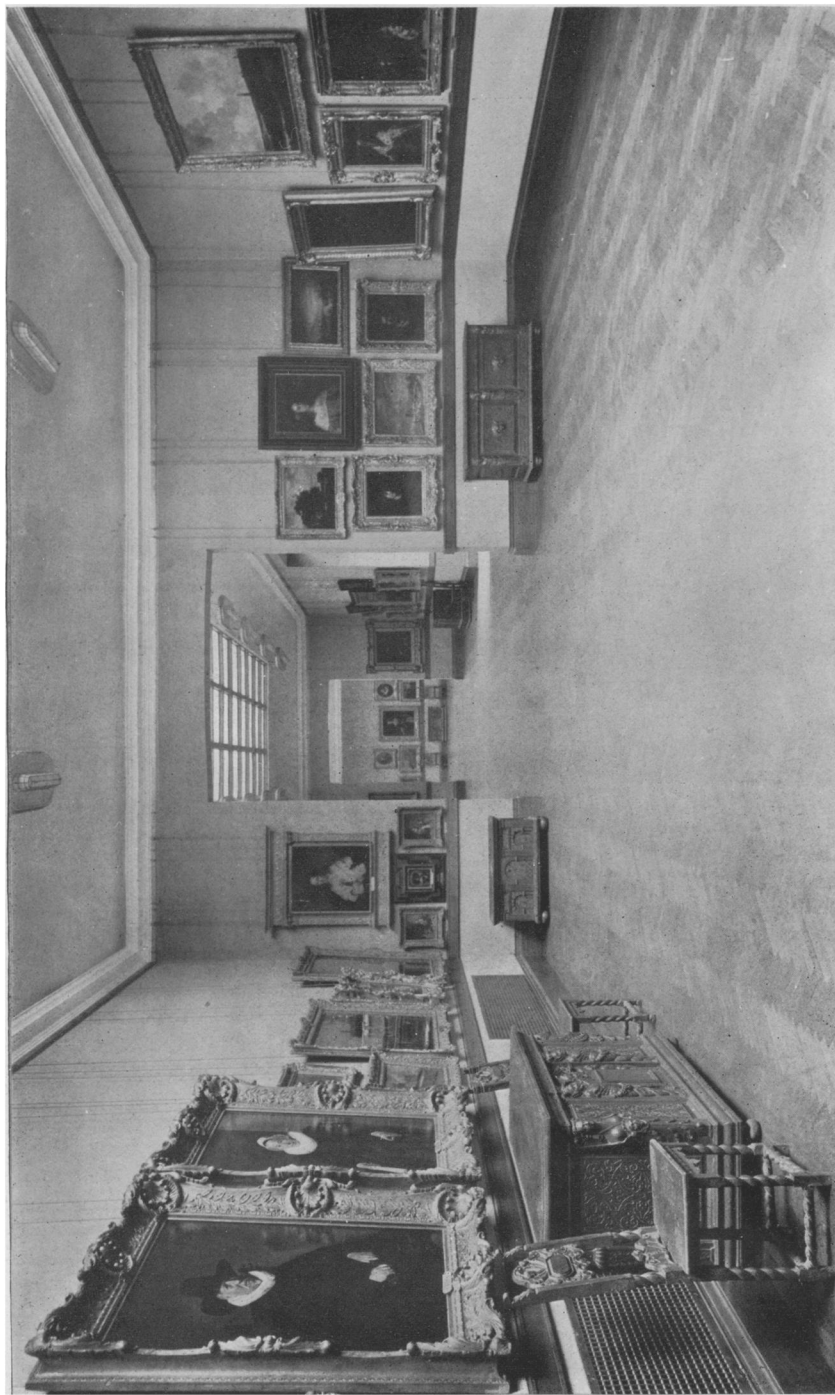
such an age of sturdy materialism should develop the gifts which go to the making of a realistic picture? Dependence upon the visible fact, simplicity, truth, were in the very air they breathed.

While the importance of the pictures in this exhibition as so many social documents is duly to be emphasized, it is soon subordinated to purely æsthetic questions. These masters are to be prized because they produced monuments to the life of their time. They are to be honored far more because they were men of rare accomplishment. This is where the Rembrandts, for example, detach the observer from all thought of the Dutch and set him to thinking only of one great man's consummate powers. Allusion has been made to the cool gray light of Holland. It formed the art of the school, in some of its aspects, but it could not beat down the originality of the master of them all. He was too much of a colorist for that, and, by the same token, too imaginative, too much a man of brains. It is worth while, as an illustration of the manner in which art is influenced in the making by more than the manual dexterity of which we are always hearing so much, to compare the essential stuff of Rembrandt's work with that to be found in the work of Hals. The latter is supreme, so far as he goes. The portraits by him in this collection are sheer miracles of technique. Consider the free, direct, and almost uncannily masterful brushwork in the portraits of Herr Bodolphe and his wife, lent by Mr. Morgan, and especially look at the modeling of the woman's face. Here you have virtuosity kept superbly in hand. Again, in Mr. Libbey's "Boy Playing a Flute," you have it fairly swaggering; the artist seems to exploit his marvelous resources with a shout of jubilant authority. Loosely though he may handle his motive, as in the portrait just mentioned, or firmly and crisply, as in Mr. Borden's charmingly blonde "Caspar Sibelius," or Mrs. Huntington's "Portrait of a Man," he is always the man of an incomparably elastic and sure brush. He goes to the heart of his sitter, too, painting his prosperous bourgeois or his dashing young blood with all the straightforward human

sympathy in the world. But while his feet are so stoutly planted on the earth that he paints you truth itself, while he is such a magician of the brush that he deeply satisfies your sense of style, it is to Rembrandt that you turn to see truth, and style, raised to the nth power.

He, Rembrandt, is the great psychologist, the plunger into depths of which Hals knew nothing, the interpreter of emotions which seem to have at once stirred his soul and prodigiously heightened his technical powers. How wide was his range! There is a bit of still life here, Mr. Johnson's "Slaughtered Ox," to show how he could amuse himself just with the values to be played with in a curious mass of tone. There is nothing to disclose the religious intensity which he could put into the "Supper at Emmaus," in the Louvre, or the "Manoah's Prayer," at Dresden, and nothing illustrative of the dramatic passion which electrifies the great "Samson and Delilah," but there are gleams of his poetic fervor in Mr. Johnson's exquisite "Finding of Moses," and his pathos comes out poignantly in Mr. Borden's noble "Lucretia." For another strain in Rembrandt's opulent nature, observe, too, the graceful "Sibyl," owned by Mr. Davis. It is a souvenir, one divines, of a light and happy moment. The figure is alluring. Over its fragile elegance the brush, often so heavily loaded, passes with suave swiftness. Very delicate and vivacious does this seem beside the typical Rembrandt of his later period, with its thick impasto. It stands for a quite separate mood. But it is not in diversity of theme and mood alone that he imposes the weight of his genius upon us. It is, rather by his power and penetration within a comparatively restricted field that he manifests his singularity. Of the numerous paintings by him shown on this occasion nearly all are portraits, and the important thing to note is the positive grandeur which they, by themselves, bring into the exhibition.

He knows the spirit of youth, as witness the glowing "Saskia," belonging to Mr. Widener, or the "Young Painter," lent by Mr. Morgan. He knows the force and pride of manhood, as witness Mr. Vanderbilt's "Noble Slav," a kind of monument



HUDSON-FULTON EXHIBITION, DUTCH SECTION



HUDSON-FULTON EXHIBITION, DUTCH SECTION

to arrogant masculinity. Then, glancing as we pass at such definitive studies of elderly complacency as Mrs. Havemeyer's celebrated "Gilder," we watch him at perhaps the gravest of all his tasks, the interpretation of old age. If there are two Rembrandts here which more than any others might be chosen as revealing the full height of his genius, they are the "Portrait of Himself," the majestic canvas of 1658 lent by Mr. Frick, and Mrs. Huntington's solemn "Savant," the portrait including an antique bust. It is not realism in any narrow sense that you apprehend in such paintings as these. It is realism surcharged with feeling, technique in which the power of the soul is active. One thinks of Michelangelo in the presence of the two portraits, of his largeness of form, his way of lifting the human body on to a plane of high imaginative significance. Only the Italian master was wont to throw a godlike sublimity over his models. Rembrandt keeps close to the tragedy of this world. Painting his own portrait or that of his brooding savant, he works broadly, grandly, with something of Michelangelo's elemental energy, but all the time his bosom is packed with intense emotion, all the time he is touched with "the sense of tears in human things." It is tempting, in any survey of a collection like this one, to pursue ideas of execution, to note, for example, the passage of Rembrandt through the close workmanship of his earlier period to the magnificent breadth of his prime and the sunset splendors of his closing years. But before such portraits as these, saturated in creative power, to talk of details of brushwork is to spell anticlimax.

The lover of painting for its own sake suffers no such embarrassment in approaching Vermeer. Though he painted once a picture of "Diana and Her Nymphs," a decidedly pedestrian conception of a mythological theme, now in the museum at The Hague, and though there is unquestionable dignity in the "Jesus in the House of Martha," by him, which is owned in Scotland, he never made any pretense of appealing to his public on lofty grounds. For him it was enough to paint some placid lady of Delft, occupied in household duties, or

seated at her dressing table, or idly talking with her cavalier. He was content with this simple ambition—since in the achievement of it he could practice a sort of wizardry, poetizing paint, extorting from his pure surfaces a beauty which Rembrandt himself, with all his tremendous powers, could not have attained. Perhaps the master would have disdained Vermeer's ideal as something not altogether worthy of his genius, a thing naturally to be left to a quieter, more refined and, perhaps, smaller temperament. Vermeer could afford to concentrate himself upon his modest inspiration. It was, at any rate, authentic, and, what is more, it led him to perfection. There are five examples of him at the Museum, and, as has been noted, Mr. Altman is to lend another. This is good fortune, indeed, considering that there are only thirty-odd Vermeers in the world. It is interesting to observe, too, that of the specimens now shown the finest is that "Girl with Water Jug," which is a permanent possession of the Museum, forming part of the late Mr. Marquand's fine collection. Even Mr. Morgan's "Lady Writing" and Mrs. Huntington's "Lady with Lute," both radiantly beautiful paintings, seem a little less gemlike than this flawless study of blues and whites.

It is not only his superiority in respect to style, but his finer qualities as a colorist and a painter of light that give Vermeer an almost cruel advantage over those fellow countrymen of his who labored in the same field. There are some notable specimens of their craft in this exhibition. Senator Clark, Mr. Borden, and Mr. Frick have each lent a good piece by Terborch; Mrs. Havemeyer sends her brilliant picture of "The Visit," by De Hoogh, and besides several other examples of that artist, there are two thoroughly representative Metsus. These paintings are intrinsically admirable, and they serve, of course, a useful purpose in rounding out a chapter of Dutch art in a scheme like that arranged at the Museum. At the same time one cannot help speculating, half amusedly, as to how much more effective they would be if there were no Vermeers about. Beside his cool white light the luminosity of De Hoogh seems

artificial and sadly overwrought. He makes Terborch look dull and hard, and Metsu trivial. Above all, his wonderful surfaces, so smooth and yet so soft, so jewel-like and yet so clearly *painted*, in the artist's closest sense of the term, put theirs to shame. For a little lesson in the difference between the masterly manipulation of pigment and the humdrum management of the same problem, compare the treatment of the blue skirt in the Marquand Vermeer with that of the red dress worn by the last figure on the right in Mr. Borden's De Hoogh, "The Music Party." It is an instance of the crushing triumph of genius over talent. One comes back, too, in noting this contrast, to the ever-absorbing question of the relation of spirit to substance. Hals, painting humanity with gusto, still cannot mold it to quite the moving forms that lie within the reach of the more creative Rembrandt. De Hoogh and his compeers use the same models that answered for Vermeer. They trust, as he did, to the life about them, but they lack his last subtle *flair*, his inalienable sense of beauty. So it is with Jan Steen, that boisterously sympathetic limner of rustic manners, the ways of the barnyard and the tavern. It is impossible not to kindle to the spirit, the truth, and the skill in the pictures by him at the Museum. It would be absurd to undervalue their artless comedy, and in one example, the "Grace Before Meat," lent by Mr. Johnson, we are touchingly reminded that he, too, had his not ignoble moments. Nevertheless, you cannot find delight, a lasting sensation of beauty, in the Dutch Hogarth as you can find it in Vermeer.

## GREAT DUTCH ARTISTS

BY BYRON P. STEPHENSON

FROM THE "EVENING POST," SEPTEMBER 20, 1909

IN any collection of paintings, even where the greatest of the Italian schools are to be seen, a Rembrandt must hold its own. But in an exhibition shared only by his Dutch contemporaries, although Franz Hals may be there

at his best, Rembrandt, by the transcendent strength of his genius, by his intellectual power, commands.

In the central hall, occupying the principal place, hangs the "Portrait of Himself" (Henry C. Frick's), which was painted in 1658. Here is individuality, here is breadth, here is profundity of ideas. Rembrandt succeeded better than any other painter at reaching the soul, but it may have been more often his own soul than that of his sitter which he reached, after he had fallen on evil days. Probably in "The Savant" (Mrs. Collis P. Huntington's), who touches a bust of Homer, the faraway expression of those sad eyes expressed more the feelings of the painter than of the man who was posing for him. But in the Frick picture, Rembrandt gives us his own soul in his own portrait; he gives us the tragedy of his own life. All his worldly goods had been taken away; his house had been sold, and at fifty-two years of age he was left to begin the world again. The blow is bitter, but the fires in the man are not yet extinguished, his energy has not relaxed, and three years later he paints the great "Six Syndics of the Cloth Hall," a *chef d'œuvre* in which he conquers fresh difficulties.

## REMBRANDT IN HAPPIER DAYS

The happiest days of Rembrandt's life were the nine years (1633-42) from the date of his betrothal to Saskia van Ulenburgh to her death. Her portrait (P. A. B. Widener's), if not an altogether satisfactory picture, is full of the bright light and brilliant color of Rembrandt's joyous years. A charming portrait of himself (Herbert S. Terrell's), resembling much that in the National Gallery, and showing him in the happiest of moods, was painted six years after their marriage. To the same date belong the celebrated so-called "Gilder," or "Le Doreur" (Mrs. H. O. Havemeyer's), one of the most exquisitely finished of that highly finishing period of Rembrandt's painting career, and the "Portrait of an Old Woman" (Mrs. Havemeyer's), both wonderfully warm and golden in coloring. "The Gilder" was an artist named Dorner,





PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF  
BY REMBRANDT  
LENT BY MR. EDWARD DRUMMOND LIBBEY



PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF  
BY REMBRANDT  
LENT BY HERBERT L. TERRELL



PORTRAIT OF HIMSELF  
BY REMBRANDT  
LENT BY MR. P. A. B. WIDENER